

AN
ODE
ON
BEAUTY,

To which are prefixed *Stone / a*
R
Some Observations on TASTE,

And on the
Present State of POETRY in *England.*

*Juvat immemorata ferentem
Ingenuis Oculisque legi Manibusque teneri. Hor.*



L O N D O N:

Printed for M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster-Row*, and
R. DODSLEY, in *Pall-mall.* MDCCXLIX.

(Price SIX-PENCE.)

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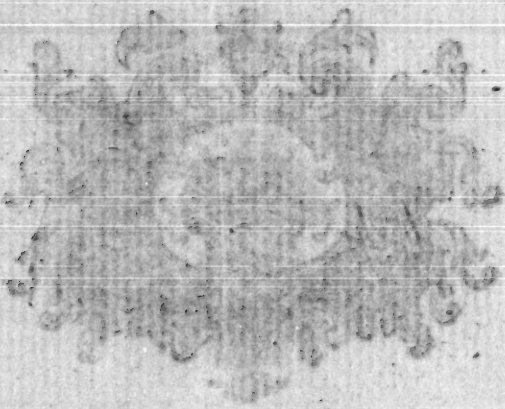
Some Observations on TASTE



And on the

Present State of Poetry in England.

Printed for M. COOPER, in Pall-mall, near St. James's Church, 1791.



L O N D O N

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WE live in an Age when *Things* are published under the Titles of *Epic Poems, Tragedies, and Comedies*, the Authors of which, if we may judge from their Writings, ought to be numbered among the humblest of Readers; and their Pieces may with as much Propriety be called by any other Names, if Nobleness of Design, Justness of Sentiment, Preservation of Characters, Dignity of Expression, and Harmony of Numbers, are requisite to the two first, and Wit, Humour, or Elegance, to the last. There is indeed almost every Day something substituted for Poetry of one Sort or other that is as unlike it as Vice is to Virtue, or Deformity of any Kind to Beauty; but of all Sorts of Poetry none has been so often attempted as the *Ode*, nor with less Success; and I will venture, however arbitrary it may seem, to affirm that we have but few, if *any**, Poets living, who have made considerable Advances towards Perfection in it: some Readers perhaps may be so indulgent as to allow that Merit to the Author of the following Piece; whose Intent is to rescue this noble Species of Poetry (an Excellence in which has placed two of the Antients in the first Class of Writers) from the Contempt which the rash and injudicious Sallies of many have brought upon it among the Readers of *English* Verse; and his farther Design is to establish a true Taste of poetical Compositions, by his best Endeavours to approach towards classical Purity, in a Set of Odes written on Subjects worthy the Attention of the wisest. The Connection between *good Taste* and *good Manners* is inseparable; the Object to both is *Beauty*; which is the Result of *Wisdom* and

* Notwithstanding this Censure passed on the Odes which have been published by Poets (if I may so call them) of the present Age, those written by the Author of that excellent Poem called *The Pleasures of Imagination* merit a more than ordinary Distinction from the rest.

Truth; the Promotion of the first therefore is the Promotion of the other; and I shall, in some future Essays, demonstrate the mutual Dependence of one on the other; I shall likewise point out the few Poets in our own Language (and short, very short, the Catalogue) who offer fair for Immortality: the Rest I need not mention, but may leave them to the Hand of Time: and I hope, by such Rules of judging as I shall hereafter lay down, to remove that false Taste which now prevails among too many for such Writings as are a Dishonour to the Land, and which are not the Fruits of a fine Imagination but of wanton and distempered Brains. We have seen dull and trifling Writers espoused by dull and trifling Patrons; and the Multitude has sometimes been led astray by the Favour and Applause which Persons of Rank and popular Characters have shewed to undeserving Authors; the Business of Criticism therefore is to preserve, as much as possible, the Judgment from warping, and to point out what is worthy Esteem and Admiration. Bad Critics and bad Poets, and indeed bad Writers of any Kind, are public Nuisances, and so far offensive as the Credit of their Writings may obtain. A good Poet and good Critic are public Benefits; and, whenever I perform the Part of either, I think myself happy in having approved myself a good Citizen.

November, 1749.

ODE
ON
BEAUTY,
To ANDREW STONE *Esq;*

I.
DIRECT thine Eye to yonder Plains,
Where *Ceres*, fruitful Goddess, reigns,
While Summer glows in all her Pride:
Look round the Heart-inspiring Scene,
The purple Sky, the Meadows green,
Reflected by the chrystal Tyde:

II.
Behold the stately solemn Grove,
For Contemplation form'd, or Love,
Cheer'd with the Linnet's Ev'ning Song;
See Harvests bending to the Gale,
Where, thro the winding flow'ry Vale,
The *Medway* rolls his Stream along:

III.

Stand on the fam'd, the rising, Ground,
 Where *Boughton-Hill**, with Forests crown'd,
 The fair extensive View commands,
 Valleys and Mountains, Lakes and Seas,
 Proud Tow'rs and humble Cottages,
 Rocks, steril Heaths, and fertile Lands:

IV.

Or see where Art with Nature vies
 In *Esher's*† Bow'rs, which sweetly rise,
 To glad the weary'd Trav'ler's Sight,
 As o'er the parch'd and barren Soil,
 Oppress'd with Heat, he seems to toil,
 And shun the sad Approach of Night:

V.

The World's majestic Frame survey,
 The silver Moon, the solar Ray,
 With all the golden Orbs around;
 Then say, O! *Stone*, for thou can'st tell
 Where *Beauty* most delights to dwell,
 What can in Nature's Store be found,

VI.

What can the noble Mind comprise,
 O! what can meet our wond'ring Eyes,
 More beautiful than these?
 Where does the pure celestial Maid
 Reside in brighter Charms array'd,
 Where more surprise and please?

* About five Miles on the North Side of Canterbury.

† The Duke of Newcastle's Gardens, call'd Claremont, in the Parish of *Esher*, in *Surry*.

VII.

Not in the Pomp of martial Deeds,
 Of glitt'ring Arms, and neighing Steeds,
 In well fought Fields, nor Battels won,
 Nor in the fairest Fruits of War,
 When *Fame* in Triumph mounts the Car,
 And ranks the Name with *Philip's* Son,

VIII.

Not in the gaudy swelling Train
 That ushers in a Monarch's Reign,
 Nor what the Wealth of *India* brings,
 Not in the Tyrant's boundless Sway,
 Nor in the Joys when Nymphs obey,
 Nor in the Smiles, nor Crowns, of Kings,

IX.

Nor in the soft angelic Face,
 Tho often with attractive Grace
 The *Smiles* their Sov'reign there reveal,
 When she, with all the Magnet's Pow'r,
 Draws to her sweet enchanting Bow'r
 Heroic Souls, and Hearts of Steel.

X.

Where then is *Beauty*, radiant Queen,
 In most refulgent Lustre seen,
 Where does she most her Charms display,
 In the great Mind, the gen'rous Breast,
 Enthron'd the Goddess sits confess'd,
 More splendent than the Eye of Day,

XI.

Deriv'd from *Wisdom* and from *Truth*,
 Endow'd with everlasting Youth,
 With what Pre-eminence of Worth,
 She brighten'd, and enrich'd, the Grove
 Where the great Souls of *Athens* strove
 To bring the *Loves* and *Graces* forth!

XII.

Each blameless *Love* and spotless *Grace*,
 Were guided to the sacred Place
 By *Socrates*, and *Plato's* Hands:
 Attendants they in *Beauty's* Train
 With *Health*, with *Peace*, and *Joy*, remain,
 United in eternal Bands.

XIII.

Where-e'er celestial *Venus* moves,
 With all her *Graces*, all her *Loves*,
Knowledge, *Content*, and *Pleasure's* there:
 From her they flow, with her they dwell,
 Like Music from the vocal Shell,
 Or Sweets in the *Sabaean* Air.

XIV.

Th' imperial *Beauty* of the Skies,
 Who saw the World's Foundations rise,
 Congenial she with Heav'n's great Sire,
 From *Athens* with unfading Bloom
 Conspicuous wing'd her Flight to *Rome*,
 Bright Guardian of the *Vestal* Fire

XV.

From *Tiber's* Banks, where once she stood
 Defended by the wife and good,
 The Queen long since indignant fled:
 Northward she shoots her lucid Beams,
 And now by *Cam's* immortal Streams
 She rears her sweet majestic Head:

XVI.

Above the Reach of Censure great,
 Such Statesmen as have blest'd the State,
 Heroes to fair Distinction born,
 Sages, and Poets who can give
 To Heroes, and to Kings, to live,
 Her Domes and Temples there adorn:

XVII.

See the bright Vision, brighter far
 Than is the brightest wand'ring Star!
 O! hail her to the soft Retreat!
 Flush'd with the same immortal Bloom
 With which she pass'd thro *Greece*, and *Rome*,
 She visits now the Muse's Seat:

XVIII.

Thou know'st her, *Stone*, each Deed of thine
 Receives the Virgin's Stamp divine,
 And *Malice* can no longer stay:
 She shuts *Detraction* from the Light,
 Makes *Envy* shroud her Head in Night,
 And drives *Deformity* away.

XIX. What

XIX.

What Joys serene the heav'nly Guest
Diffuses thro the virtuous Breast!

How cheerful is her earliest Dawn!
As Kindness to the Lover's Smart,
As Health returning to the Heart,
Or vernal Sunbeams to the Lawn!

XX.

O! blest'd, thrice blest'd, th' important Hour!
I feel her, and confess her Pow'r!

Her Presence does my Soul inspire!
Bright Goddess, I thy Will obey,
(While thou wilt consecrate the Lay,)
And snatch from vulgar Hands the Lyre!

XXI.

'Tis done, O! Stone: the Numbers flow
Soft as the gently falling Snow,
Or roll impetuous along!
If the dread Subject shall demand
The Vigour of a master Hand,
Nervous and great shall be the Song.

XXII.

If the divine inspiring Maid
Refuses her enliv'ning Aid,
In vain the Bard attempts to sing,
Painters in vain the Canvas spread,
In vain the Sculptor moulds the Head,
And Harpers thrum in vain the String.

XXIII.

May *Holles*, Learning's Friend and thine,
 Be long the foremost at her Shrine,
 Long o'er the learned Band preside:
 By *Cam* the noble Student first
 Slak'd at the Fountain-head his Thirst,
Beauty his never-erring Guide:

XXIV.

By the pure Love of Science led,
 Of ev'ry Art th' elected Head,
 His Fame the Round of Time shall run,
 Like *Xenophon* more glorious far,
 In Learning's Garb than that of War,
 Than *Cyrus* or his conqu'ring † Son:

XXV.

The fairest Offsprings of the Sky,
Wisdom and *Truth* attract his Eye,
 While ev'ry *Virtue* on him smiles;
 And *Poesy*, of heav'nly Birth,
 Shall keep his fav'rite Name on Earth,
 While *Britain* lasts the Queen of Isles.

† Cambyfes, the Son of *Cyrus*, added *Ægypt* to the vast Empire which came to him from his Father.

August, 1749.

III X X

Brandy his never-ending Guide;
 Elak'd at the Fountain-head his Thrill,
 By Cam the noble Student And
 Long o'er the learned Band preside;
 Be long the foremost at her Shrine,
 May Holbe's Learning's Friend and Line!

VIXX

Than Gwyn or his conquering
In Learning's Gird than that of War,
Like Xenophon more glorious far,
He turns the Round of Time that run
Of every Art the elected Band,
By the pure Love of Science led.

VXX

While Britain late the Queen of Isles,
 Shall keep his favorite Name on Earth,
 And Poesy of heavenly Birth,
 While ev'ry Virtue on him smiles;
 Wisdom and Truth attend his Eye,
 The faint Offspring of the Sky.

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August

